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Taxonomic position of the genus *Culicicapa* Swinhoe (Muscicapidae)

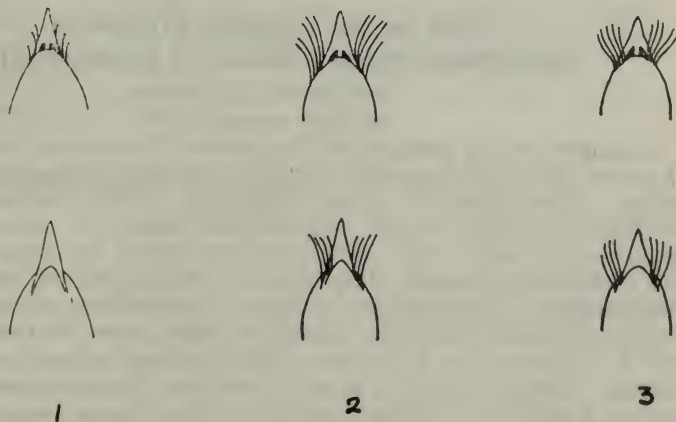
by SHANE A. PARKER

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Culicicapa contains two predominantly yellow-green and bright yellow flycatchers, *C. ceylonensis* (Indo-Malaya, China) and *C. helianthea* (Philippines and Celebes). Vaurie, (1953) in a paper dealing with the Muscipapini, concludes that *Culicicapa* might prove referable to the Rhipidurini upon further study. The purpose of this note is to show that there are adequate grounds for including *Culicicapa* in the latter tribe.

Vaurie (p.531) shows that *Culicicapa* differs from all muscipapine genera in the arrangement and number of the rictal setae. This feature of *Culicicapa* is repeated in all species of *Rhipidura*.

As regards habits, Vaurie considers *Culicicapa* to be far more restless and gregarious than the rest of the Muscipapini. Salim Ali (1949) describes the ceaseless acrobatics and foraging of *C. ceylonensis*. Smythies (1953) also notes tail-fanning in this species. According to Heinroth (in Stresemann 1940) *C. helianthea* is similar in its actions to its congener. Though differing from the true flycatchers in the mode of feeding, the species of



Arrangement of rictal setae (1) *Muscipapa* (2) *Rhipidura* (3) *Culicicapa*
a. Dorsal view b. Ventral view

Culicicapa match those of *Rhipidura* in this respect; their actions are similar to those recorded by Whistler (1949) for *R. aureola*, a typical fantail.

The similarity between *Culicicapa* and *Rhipidura* is emphasized by the colour and pattern of their eggshells, a point which does not seem to have been referred to previously. Apart from the immaculate pale blue or white eggs of such species as *Ficedula hypoleuca*, *F. albicollis* and *F. strophitata*, the eggs of the Muscicapini are whitish, greenish or bluish in ground colour, spotted, blotched or clouded with red-brown, umber and grey generally over the entire shell. The eggs of the Rhipidurini on the other hand are highly distinctive. Save those of *R. hypoxantha*, which have a solid cap of pinkish-brown at the large end, the eggs of all species of *Rhipidura* are pale or rich cream in ground colour, with a ring around the large end or the equator of brownish and greyish spots and blotches. Markings are often present over the rest of the shell, as in *R. fuliginosa*, but are never as heavy or concentrated as in the ring. The eggs of *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, of which there is a long series in the collections of the B.M. (N.H.), are identical in colour and position of markings with those of *Rhipidura*.

To summarize: in the arrangement of the rectal setae, mode of feeding and colour of eggs, *Culicicapa* bears a closer resemblance to *Rhipidura* than to any of the muscicapine genera, and because of this it seems appropriate to include it in the tribe Rhipidurini rather than in the Muscicapini.

I should like to thank Mr. J. D. Macdonald of the Bird Section of the B.M.(N.H.) for reading through the ms. of this note.

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Note on the Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* (Müller) in southern Africa

by WALTER J. LAWSON

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In a paper on the southern African races of *Terpsiphone viridis* I showed (Lawson 1962) that three races must be admitted as occurring in southern Africa, these being *T.v. granti* (Roberts), 1948: Duivenhoek River, Swellendam, Cape Province, the southern race; *T. v. violacea* (Grant & Mackworth-Praed), 1940: Fort Hill, Nyasaland occurring throughout the southern and central Moçambique, northern and western Transvaal, Bechuanaland Protectorate, northern South-West Africa, southern Angola, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and eastern Northern Rhodesia, and *T. v. plumbeiceps* Reichenow, 1898: Malanje, Angola, which ranges through northern Angola, western Northern Rhodesia and the south-eastern Congo. *T. v. violacea* and *T. v. plumbeiceps* were differentiated from one another chiefly by the former having white and the latter rufous under tail-coverts.